

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (previously presented) A lead frame comprising:  
a tie bar to which an element loading portion to be loaded with a semiconductor element is connected by a lead forming portion;

an outside frame formed with positioning holes, said tie bar being connected to said outside frame; and

a deformable portion included in said tie bar for preventing said outside frame from deforming under extraneous physical stress.

2. (currently amended) The lead frame as claimed in claim 1, wherein said deformable portion comprises a rod portion smaller in width than the tie bar and is configured to deform during lead forming, which bends said lead forming portion, to thereby absorb stress acting on said tie bar.

3. (currently amended) The lead frame as claimed in claim ~~[[2]]~~ 1, wherein said deformable portion ~~[[is]]~~ comprises a link connecting said tie bar to said outside frame, said link having two end portions and an intermediate portion, a diameter of the intermediate portion being smaller than a diameter of

either of said two end portions, the link configured to absorb a force pulling said tie bar toward said element loading portion.

4. (currently amended) The lead frame as claimed in claim [[3]] 1, wherein ~~the semiconductor device comprises a photocoupler~~ said deformable portion comprises a link connecting said tie bar to said outside frame, said link having deformable shape in a form of narrow steps.

5. (previously presented) A frame comprising a combination of lead frames arranged such that element loading portions to be loaded with semiconductor elements thereof are positioned one above the other, said lead frames each comprising:

a tie bar to which the element loading portions are connected by lead forming portions;

an outside frame formed with positioning holes, said tie bar being connected to said outside frame; and

a deformable portion included in said tie bar for preventing said outside frame from deforming under physical stress.

6. (original) The frame as claimed in claim 5, wherein the element loading portions of only one of the lead frames are bent relative to lead forming portions associated therewith.

7. (original) The frame as claimed in claim 6, wherein said deformable portion is sealed with resin to thereby form a

reinforcing portion that prevents said deformable portion from deforming after lead forming.

8. (original) The frame as claimed in claim 6, wherein the lead forming portions are bent while being crushed to be locally thinned and extended.

9. (original) The frame as claimed in claim 8, wherein said reinforcing portion includes said deformable portion and a portion of said outside frame to which said deformable portion is connected.

10. (original) The frame as claimed in claim 9, wherein said deformable portion prevents the positioning holes and the element loading portions from being displaced to thereby maintain a preselected positional relation between said positioning holes and said element loading portions.

11. (currently amended) [[In a]] A semiconductor device comprising:

a pair of element loading portions loaded with semiconductor elements and positioned one above the other, [[and]]

seal resin sealing said pair of element loading portions, and

leads connected to a respective semiconductor element being exposed on said seal resin,

wherein only one of said pair of element loading portions is bent upward relative to said leads.

12. (previously presented) The semiconductor device as claimed in claim 11, wherein the leads are positioned on an extension of a bottom of said seal resin so that a bottom surface of said leads and a bottom surface of said seal resin are coplanar.

13. (original) The semiconductor device as claimed in claim 12, wherein said semiconductor device comprises a photocoupler comprising a light emitting element and a light-sensitive element that face each other.

14. (original) The semiconductor device as claimed in claim 13, wherein the leads are implemented by lead forming portions included in a frame used to form semiconductor devices, said frame comprising a combination of lead frames each comprising:

a tie bar to which the element loading portions are connected by lead forming portion;

an outside frame formed with positioning holes, said tie bar being connected to said outside frame; and

a deformable portion included in said tie bar for protecting said outside frame from deforming.

15. (original) A method of producing a semiconductor device by using a frame, said method comprising:

a lead forming step of bending lead forming portions after primary sealing using light-transmitting resin; and

a sealing step of sealing deformable portions included in a lead frame after said lead forming step.

16. (canceled)

17. (original) The method as claimed in claim 16, wherein said lead forming step comprises bending the lead forming portions while crushing said lead forming portions to thereby locally thin and extend said lead forming portions.

18. (canceled)

19. (original) The method as claimed in claim 15, wherein said frame comprises a combination of lead frames each comprising:

a tie bar to which element loading portions are connected by lead forming portions;

an outside frame formed with positioning holes, said tie bar being connected to said outside frame; and

a deformable portion included in said tie bar for protecting said outside frame from deforming.

20. (new) The lead frame of claim 1, wherein said deformable portion comprises a link connecting said tie bar to said outside frame, said link comprising plural adjacent and spaced apart deformable elements.

21. (new) The lead frame of claim 1, wherein the deformable portion comprises a deformable link connecting said tie bar to said outside frame, said link being readily deformable in a direction parallel to the outside frame so as to absorb a force pulling said tie bar toward said element loading portions.

22. (new) The lead frame of claim 21, wherein said link has a width smaller than a width of said tie bar.